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XIX.—RHYTHM AND RIME BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST

The orthodox view regarding the introduction of end rime into English verse is succinctly set forth in the following quotations: “Endrime, being a stranger to the early Germanic languages, its appearance in any of them may commonly be taken as a sign of foreign influence. In general, of course, rime and the stanza were introduced together into English verse, under the influence of Latin hymns and French lyrics.”¹ “Die alliterierende Langzeile war die einzige in der ags. Poesie bekannte Versart und blieb in derselben bis zu ende der ersten ags. oder altenglischen Sprachperiode in Gebrauch.”² “The transformation of the O. E. alliterative line into rhyme verse did not take place before the Middle English period. It was due to the influence of the rhymed French and Latin verse.”³ “Alliterative verse was remodelled on Latin and French verse—or foreign verses were directly imitated.”⁴ The implication is that there never existed in Anglo-Saxon any verse of a form different from that of the five-type alliterative verse which prevails in the corpus of extant Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Nevertheless, this view of the case appears upon examination to be highly improbable, not to say preposterous. For, unless the Anglo-Saxons were quite abnormal in their humanity, they must have composed many unpretentious songs and ballads—hymns, prayers, work songs, war songs,

¹ R. M. Alden, *English Verse*, N. Y., 1903, p. 121.

² Schipper, *Grundriss der Eng. Metrik*, p. 54.

³ Kaluza: *A Short History of English Versification*, tr. by A. C. Dunstan, London, 1911, p. 126.

⁴ Kaluza: *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

songs of joy and grief—with simple strongly marked rhythm, often with considerable alliteration, assonance, end rime, parallelism, and repetition: songs to be *sung*, not recited, by the individual or by the group. It is hardly conceivable that songs of such import, simple and popular lyrics, were ever composed in the stately five-type alliterating line with its irregularly shifting rhythms, which (however well adapted to chanting recitative) had little or no singing quality, and which, moreover, were quite possibly little known among the common people. In fact, the whole body of Anglo-Saxon literature that has come down to us does not reflect or interpret the life of the whole people: from the poetry as from the prose—including the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Bede's *History*—we learn a good deal of priest, king, eorl, and warrior, but little indeed of the simple annals of the poor and humble.

The existence, to be sure, of popular verse, of ballad-like form, with strong and simple rhythm, assonance, and rime (not exact or systematic) has been suggested; though the statements have been for the most part brief, allusive, and vague, and have not been supported by evidence which might have been adduced. For example, Kluge: "Aber diese eigenart [rime] Cynewulfs der von lateinischen hymnen gelernt haben muss, war für die weitere entwicklung der volkstümlichen poesie im ags. zeitalter ohne folgen. Dagegen die bisher wesentlich ausgehobenen fälle von sporadisch gebrauchten reimen sind . . . von weittragender wirkung gewesen: sie bilden den anfangspunkt einer entwicklungsreihe, an deren ende Layamons dichtung steht."⁵ And later: "In der entwicklung dieses endreimes erkennen wir genau die fortschritte; von der volksdichtung nur gelegentlich als versschmuck gebraucht,

⁵ F. Kluge, "Zur Geschichte des Reimes," *P. B. B.*, ix, 444.

steigert sich sein sporadisches auftreten numerell und ermöglicht uns in der geschichte der metrischen technik von Caedmons hymnus an bis auf Layamon die allmähliche ausbildung eines neuen versprincipes zu verfolgen, das seinen echt germanisch charakter in Layamon jedenfalls klar zu schau trägt.”⁶ One may cite also the statements of Mr. John S. Westlake in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*: “During the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries the classical rhetorical metre had already begun to deteriorate, and was being replaced by the sung metre of the popular ballad. . . . Judith contains a fair number of lines which are undoubtedly clear types of sung verse. . . . The adoption of this metre, which, although ancient, here exhibits what are practically its first known traces in Old English literature, is carried to much greater lengths in the poems imbedded in the Chronicle.”⁷ This Old English sung or ballad metre is fundamentally “a four-beat rhythm which must end in a stress.”⁸

“Vulgar ballads of all descriptions were in this metre originally, and what epic classical matter was drawn from them was transformed into the rhetorical courtly metre. In England the popular metre remained deposed in favor of its younger sister, the rhetorical metre, longer than elsewhere, and its sphere must have been exclusively the vulgar.”⁹

In the middle of the last century Wilhelm Grimm in his essay on the history of rime, without marshalling and reviewing the evidence, arrived at a definite opinion:

⁶ Kluge, *op. cit.*, p. 449.

⁷ *Cambridge Hist. Eng. Lit.*, I, 151.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 661.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 468.

Das wenige was sich aus der zeit vor Otfrid erhalten hat ist mythischen oder epischen inhalts und bei dem vortrag dieser dichtungen wird singen und sagen noch keinen eigentlichen gegensatz ausgemacht haben. Bloss gesungene lieder jener zeit, *vulgares cantilena*e, sind nicht auf uns gelangt, doch bestimmte zeugnisse lassen an ihrem dasein nicht zweifeln. Die *cantica rustica et inepta* oder *turpida et luxuriosa* wie die geistlichen in ihrem widerwillen sie schalten, mögen sich auf wirkliche, nicht absichtlich vorausgesetzte ereignisse bezogen haben, wie dies bei echten volksliedern geschiet. Da sie aber meiner meinung nach bei dem gesang nicht konnte entbehrt werden, so ist wohl glaublich, dass jene *cantilena*e *vulgares* schon darin ihre form gefunden hatten, nemlich in jenen einfachen, meist aus vier, manchmal aus sechs oder drei zeilen bestehenden absätzen, die beim volkslied nachweislich bis zum 13. jahrhundert fortgedauert haben.¹⁰

But up to the present time little has been done to substantiate Grimm's hypothesis of the *vulgares cantilena*e; no manuscripts of Anglo-Saxon *cantica rustica* have turned up, and probably none ever will. And the present orthodox view of the hypothesis is doubtless expressed by Verrier in his admirable study of English metrics:

"On pourrait supposer que chez tous les peuples germaniques il existait ainsi un mètre des chansons libre et varié, a côté du mètre plus fixe et plus savant des cinque types, et qu'il s'est perpétué jusqu'à nos jours . . . dans la poésie populaire de tous les pays germaniques. Cette hypothèse, quoique plausible, n'est pas nécessaire: les formes de cette poésie populaire ont pu naître du vers allitéré normal par une transformation nouvelle, qui apparaît clairement en Allemagne dès la première moitié du IXe siècle, chez Otfrid, et en Angleterre dès la fin du Xe, dans la Chronique Anglo-Saxonne."¹¹

And yet there are arguments based upon antecedent probability, analogy, and documentary evidence, which, if assembled would strengthen the "plausible hypothesis" to such a degree as to qualify materially the implications

¹⁰ Wilhelm Grimm, *Zur Geschichte des Reims*, Königl. Akad. der Wissenschaften, Berlin, 1852, p. 179 f.

¹¹ Paul Verrier, *Métrique Anglaise*, Paris, 1909, II, p. 165 f.

of Alden, Schipper, and Kaluza with regard to rime, rhythm, and stanza, and to modify and limit the influence assigned by them to the Latin hymns and French verse.

In the first place, without touching on the psychology of the matter, it may be said that simple, popular lyrics the world over are and always have been strongly rhythmical, that is, characterized by the regular recurrence of stress or accent at sensibly equal time intervals; that this rhythm of stress is naturally accompanied and re-enforced by the rhythm of homophony (alliteration, assonance, or rime), which not only emphasizes the stress rhythm but also creates the larger rhythms of verse and strophe.¹² If then there ever existed among the Anglo-Saxons any songs or ballads of popular origin, the overwhelming probability is that they were characterized by appreciably regular stress-rhythm and homophony, so that end rime was by no means, to use Professor Alden's phrase, "a stranger."

That such songs are not preserved in the manuscripts is not surprising. Why should we expect to find written texts of them? The authors could not write. Who would have collected them and written them down? Who would have read them if written? The people that made them know them by heart, and there were no folklore or ballad societies in those days. Asser's pretty story of how King Alfred when a boy competed for, won, and memorized the book of Anglo-Saxon poetry offered by his mother would seem to offer evidence of the prince's interest in vernacular verse of popular origin. What interested him was perhaps the same kind of thing

¹²Cf. Verrier, II, p. 212: "L'homophonie sert à mettre en relief le rythme proprement dit, le rythme intensif, dont elle souligne les temps marqués principaux, dont elle aide à signaler la division en vers, en strophes, en poèmes."

that interested Charlemagne: "Item," says Eginhard, "*barbara et antiquissima carmina, quibus veterum regum actus et bella canebantur, scripsit memoriaeque mandavit.*"¹³ These *carmina*, to be sure, *may* have been of simple ballad-like nature, arising from the people, and celebrating the feats of ancient kings, though the probability is rather that they were longer poems in epic style which had grown out of earlier popular songs. We don't know. Light would be shed on many vexed points of literary history if we once might have a glimpse of that Anglo-Saxon book with its beautiful initial letter which caught Prince Alfred's eye, or study that collection of *barbara et antiquissima carmina* which held so much interest for Charlemagne. But of the existence of simple lyrics other than the ballad there can be no doubt: the name is *leof* or *sang*. And they were of many kinds: *sorhleof*, *licleof* or *licsang*, *gifgleof*, *brydleof* or *brydsang*, *fyrdleof*, *guþleof*, *hildeleof*, *wigleof*, *fusleof*, and the like.¹⁴ Doubtless there were love songs also, for we find *winnileod* included among the popular songs in the vernacular: "Plebios psalmos seculares cantilenas aut *winnileod*; plebios psalmos seculares cantilenas vel rusticos psalmos sine auctoritate vel cantus aut *winnileod*; plebios psalmos rusticu sanc vel *winniloth*; plebios psalmos cantica rustica et inepta odo *winnileod*."¹⁵ Furthermore, from their nature it may be inferred that *leof* and *sang* were sung by the group as well as by the individual—probably that in the main they were choral songs. And one of the specific meanings of *dream* is choral song, for the glosses give as its equivalent: *efenhleofrung, concentus,*

¹³ Cf. F. M. Warren, *P. M. L. A.*, xxvi, 299.

¹⁴ Cf. Pauls *Grundr.*, 2nd ed., II, 958 ff.

¹⁵ Cf. *Grundr.*, II, 69 f., also 37-43.

*adunationes multarum vocum, jubilatio, melodia, duplex sonus, harmonia.*¹⁶

Whatever may have been the status of folk-lyric and ballad before the conversion to Christianity, after that event these songs of the people were frowned upon by the Church and regarded with contempt by the learned, who now became acquainted with Latin poetry—with Vergil, Lucan, and Statius, as well as with Ambrosius and the other hymn writers, and with the fourth century grammarians, who had much to say on Latin metrics. The terms *cantica rustica et inepta, vulgares cantilena, barbara carmina*, connote disapproval, even though *rustica* and *vulgares* may possibly be translated by the word *vernacular*. “Gegen den Volkesgesang freilich in allen seinen Gestaltungen verhielt sich die Kirche ablehnend, ja feindselig, und so ist es nicht zu verwundern, dass davon nur Weniges auf uns gekommen ist.”¹⁷ This hostility was common.

Granting then, as we must, that simple songs of popular origin existed both before and after the conversion to Christianity, and that there was much group or choral singing of these songs, which often accompanied the dance,¹⁸ what was the form of this humble poetry? Was it the same as that which prevails in the body of Anglo-Saxon and with which we are familiar—alliterating long lines of the five types, without stanza, end rime, or uniformity of rhythm? Or was it essentially different? Can one imagine a group singing and dancing to the tune of Sievers’ five types? Or can one picture a mother soothing her baby with a five-type cradle song?

¹⁶ Cf. *Grundr.*, II, 973, also 47-50.

¹⁷ *Grundr.*, II, 62 f., also 973 f.

¹⁸ Cf. *Grundr.*, II, 47 f.

In the discussion of this question there has been much fallacious argumentation, which amounts to plain begging the question. The fallacy lies in the assumption that *all* early Germanic poetry was composed in the alliterative verse. For example, Verrier, *assuming* that the alliterative verse was the only form, proceeds to argue that it was sung as well as recited. "Rien ne s'oppose donc," he says, "à ce que les Germains, après l'époque des grandes invasions, aient continué non seulement à réciter en mesure leur vers allitéré, mais encore à le chanter, comme au temps de Tacite leurs aieux le chantaient en l'honneur des dieux et à la gloire des héros. L'historien latin y revient en plusieurs endroits. Il s'agit presque partout du chant choral (*concentus*, *Germania*, III), qui exige la mesure isochrone, en particulier le chant de marche. Il y avait aussi des danses chantées, comme en temoigne Sidoine Apollinaire:

Barbaricos resonabat hymen seythicisque choreis
Nubebat flauo similis noua nupta marito.

Julien avait entendu les Alamans chanter en choeur des chants sauvages, dont la mélodie manquait de charme pour ses oreilles, mais ne laissait pas de ravir les chanteurs."¹⁹ And he quotes Jordanis: "Ante quos etiam cantu maiorum facta modulationibus citharisque caneabant."²⁰

Thus, *assuming* that alliterative verse was the only form, and reasoning from *cano* and *cantus*, he arrives at the conclusion that all early Germanic verse was sung. Even granting, for the sake of the argument, that the assumption is correct, the conclusion would be doubtful, for *cano* and *cantus* might well enough refer to a chanting recita-

¹⁹ Verrier, *Métrique Anglaise*, II, 163.

²⁰ Verrier, *op. cit.*, II, 163 n.

tive with cithara accompaniment. On the other hand, *concentus* can refer to nothing but *group singing*, as for example in dance songs, wedding songs, and the like. But choral singing demands and presupposes simple, regular, strongly marked stress-rhythm. One can not march or dance to the rhythms of the alliterative verse.

Verrier thinks the Caedmon story related by Bede to be conclusive evidence that the alliterative verse (assumed to be the only form) was sung. Caedmon "chanta en rêve des vers qu'il put répéter à son reveil. Bède (672-735) en donne une traduction latine dans son *Histoire Ecclésiastique*. Dans le manuscrit d'Ely de cette histoire, écrit en 737, le copiste a mis en marge le texte original, et nous le trouvons reproduit en saxon occidental dans la traduction de Bède qu'a fait ou fait faire Alfred le Grand. *Qu'il soit authentique ou non, peu importe. Tout ce que je veux conclure, c'est que pour Bède et pour Alfred il pouvait se chanter: or il est en vers allitérés de forme normale* (types A. B. D. E.)" ²¹ Conceding that the authenticity of the vernacular texts is doubtful, he maintains that both Bede and his Anglo-Saxon translator, in describing the poem of Caedmon, use terms that mean singing, not chanting recitative. And he quotes Bede's Latin *cano* and *carmen* and the Anglo-Saxon *singan*, though he does not show that these terms might not also describe a rhythmic recitation with harp accompaniment. But the fallacy of the whole argument appears in Verrier's last two sentences: "Whether it [the vernacular version] be authentic or not—it is in the alliterative verses of normal form, types A. B. D. E." As if for the purpose of his argument the form is of any significance whatever unless it is the original, authentic form. As a matter of

²¹ Verrier, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

fact, there is very considerable evidence that neither of the vernacular versions is authentic, for they both follow closely the Latin of Bede, who expressly declares that he is giving only the substance or *sensus* and not the order (*ordo*) of the Caedmon poem. ". . . ipse coepit cantare," says Bede, "in laudem dei conditoris versus, quos numquam audierat, quorum iste est sensus: 'Nunc laudare debemus auctorem regni caelestis, potentiam creatoris et consilium illius, facta patris gloriae. Quomodo ille, cum sit aeternus deus, omnium miraculorum auctor extitit, qui primo filiis hominum caelum pro culmine tecti, dehinc terram custos humani generis omnipotens creavit.' Hic est sensus, non autem ordo ipse verborum, quae dormiens ille canebat."²² A glance at the Anglo-Saxon—Northumbrian or West Saxon—suggests strongly that it is a close translation of Bede's *sensus* verbatim et ordinatim as far as possible. In other words, neither Bede's account nor the so-called Caedmon hymn in the vernacular is worth anything as evidence with regard to the original form of the hymn.²³ Even granting for the sake of the argument that the extant vernacular hymn is authentic in form, we should have no more knowledge than before of the *popular* verse forms; for the angel would never—humanly speaking—have permitted Caedmon to compose a doxology in the undignified and despised form.

In Bede's account there is another point that should be noted: because of his divine inspiration, Caedmon was never able to compose any *frivolous* or *idle* poetry: "Unde nil umquam frivoli et supervacui poematis facere potuit, sed ea tantummodo, quae ad religionem pertinent, religio-

²² Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, iv, cap. 24.

²³ I refrain from discussing the mythical, folklore quality of Bede's account and of poetic inspiration through dreams.

sam eius linguam decebant." A legitimate inference is that vernacular poetry of the kind that seemed to Bede frivolous and idle was common enough at the beginning of the eighth century; and if Caedmon could not sing such songs *in gebeorscipe* (*in convivio*), there were many who could. But here again, in default of any affirmative evidence, it is hard to believe that these feasting and drinking songs were ever composed in alliterating five-type verse.

The story of Aldhelm standing on the bridge and singing *quasi artem cantitandi professus* is also pertinent evidence that popular songs were common in the eighth century. For William of Malmesbury says that Aldhelm substituted in his song (*carmen triviale*) scriptural words for the original (*sensim inter ludicra verbis scripturarum insertis*) and that the song was still sung in the twelfth century (*adhuc vulgo cantatur*).²⁴

There can be no doubt then of the existence of much popular verse and song not represented in the manuscripts which have come down to us—all sorts of *vulgares cantilenae* and *cantica rustica*, feasting songs, wedding songs, war songs, songs of grief. And further there can be no doubt that many of these songs were adapted to group singing (*dream, efenhleoþrung, concentus*) which presupposes a rhythmic form quite different from that of the body of extant Anglo-Saxon poetry, that is, a form characterized by the regular recurrence of stress at sensibly equal time intervals and by the employment of homophony (assonance, end rime, and alliteration) to re-enforce this rhythm and to create the larger rhythms of verse and stanza. This is indeed a plausible hypothesis and one that we are bound to arrive at by *a priori* reasoning—the spon-

²⁴ Cf. *Grundr.*, II, 974; also Verrier, *op. cit.*, II, 164.

taneous origin and development of regular rhythm and homophony in simple lyrics.

But we may go a step further. It is instructive to consider the history of rhythm (accentual verse) and homophony in Latin poetry. Just as "classic" Anglo-Saxon poetry is in the five-type alliterating verse, so classic Latin poetry is in *quantitative* verse. But there is conclusive evidence to show that from the earliest times there existed in abundance *popular* Latin verse of a different form, characterized by regular stress-rhythm and homophony.²⁵ "Itaque duplex Poeseos genus olim exsurrexit, alterum antiquius, sed ignobile ac plebium, alterum nobile et a doctis tantummodo viris excultum. Illud *rhythmicum*, illud *metricum* appellatum est. Sed quod potissimum est animadvertisendum quamquam Metrica Poesis primas arripuerit, omniumque meliorum suffragio et usu probata laudibus ubique ornaretur: attamen Rhythmica Poesis non propterea defecit apud Graecos atque Latinos. Quum enim vulgus indoctum et rustica gens Poetam interdum agere vellet, nec legibus metri addiscendis par erat; quales poterat, versus efformare perexit: hoc est, Rhythmo contenta, Metrum contempsit: Metrum, inquam, hoc est, rigidas prosodiae leges quas perfecta Poesis sequitur."²⁶ *Rhythmus* was the regular word used to describe this popular accentual verse in vulgar use and to distinguish

²⁵ Cf. Verrier, *op. cit.*, II, 191: "Il semble bien que dans les dictions et formules de toute sorte les Italiques aient voulu rattacher les idées par la ressemblance du son, afin d'en mieux marquer le lien logique ou émotionnel et de le mieux graver dans la mémoire." E.g.: "Terra pestem teneto, saluo hic moneto," or "Nec huic morbo caput crescat aut si creverit tabescat." Cf. Verrier, II, ch. VII (L'Homophonie).

²⁶ Muratori, *Antiqq. Ital. Diss.* 40, quoted by Trench, *Sacred Latin Poetry*, p. 21.

it from the dignified and learned *metrum*.²⁷ The grammarians are explicit in making the distinction.²⁸

It will be sufficient to note here what Bede says on this point in his *De Arte Metrica*, which of course deals with Latin, not with vernacular, poetry. After explaining the structure of the principal Latin classic meters and referring to others, he continues:

Videtur autem *rhythmus* metris esse consimilis, quae est verborum modulata compositio non metrica ratione sed numero syllabarum ad judicium aurium examinata, *ut sunt carmina vulgarium poetarum*. Et quidem *rhythmus* sine metro esse potest, *metrum* vero sine *rhythmo* esse non potest: quod liquidius ita definitur. *Metrum* est ratio cum modulatione: *rhythmus* modulatio sine ratione: plerumque tamen casu quodam invenies etiam rationem in *rhythmo* non artificis moderatione servatum, sed sono et ipsa modulatione ducente, quem *vulgares poetae* necesse est rustice *docti* faciant docte: quomodo et ad instar iambici metri pulcherrime factus est hymnus ille *clarus*:

Rex aeterne Domine
Rerum creator omnium
Qui eras ante secula
Semper cum patre filius.

Et alii Ambrosiani non pauci. Item ad formam metri trochaici canunt hymnum de die judicii per alphabetum:

Apparebit repentina
Dies magna Domini,
Fur obscura velut nocte
Improvisos occupans.²⁹

²⁷ Forcellini; *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon*: “*Rhythmus . . . in rhythmis non servatur ordo, modo eadem quantitas: idem enim rhythmus est in anapaesto superant quod in dactylo conterit.*”

²⁸ Cf. Keil, *Grammatici Latini*: IV, 533; VI, 41 f., 206 f., 282, 374, 631.

²⁹ Bede, *Miscellaneous Works*, Giles ed., VI, 77 ff. Cf. also Lingard, *Hist. and Antiq. of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, II, 146 f.: “Among the Latins, there had long existed poets of an inferior class, who had emancipated themselves from the shackles which had been imposed upon them by their classic masters, and had adopted a more easy

This shows clearly enough that Bede was familiar with the accentual rhythms of the “vulgar,” popular Latin poetry and that he considered certain hymns in this popular style admirable.

Just why the hymn writers from Ambrosius on adopted and increasingly used the popular accentual verse with time in preference to the quantitative form may be a question for debate. The fact is, they did. There can be no doubt, however, that strong accentual rhythm is well adapted to choral singing and that homophony not only re-enforces this rhythm but is also a great aid to the memory. We get some light from St. Augustine, who explains why he uses accentual rhythm in his verses against the Donatists: “*Volens etiam causam Donatistarum ad ipsius humillimi vulgi et omnino imperitorum atque idiotarum notitiam pervenire et eorum, quantum fieri per nos posset, inhaerere memoriae, psalmum, qui eis cantaretur, per latinas litteras feci . . . ideo autem non aliquo carminis genere id fieri volui, ne me necessitas metrica ad aliqua verba, quae vulgo minus sunt usitata compelleret.*”³⁰ It is

system of versification, by substituting the harmony of emphasis or accent for the harmony of metre. It might indeed happen that both would coincide; but that was a matter of chance: the poet judged of the melody by the ear, attending to the artificial distribution of the accent, and not to the measure of the syllable. Thus in a line of eight syllables, by placing the ictus on every second syllable, he formed an imitation of iambic tetrameter verse; and by placing it on the first and every second syllable afterwards in succession, an imitation of the trochaic.” Here, however, it should be noted that, in view of the evidence furnished by Verrier (*op. cit.*, II, ch. vii) with regard to the antiquity of homophony, the *vulgares poetae never had been bound* by the shackles of classic meter, and that therefore it is not correct to say that they *emancipated* themselves from these shackles.

³⁰ *Augustini Retractationum Lib. I, cap. xviii* (*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. 51, p. 16). In this interesting

legitimate to infer that accentual, homophonous verse was long familiar to the common people and would therefore appeal to them.

Indeed at the very beginning of Latin literature, before, through imitation of the Greek, classical verse forms had become fixed, we find homophony in Ennius, e. g.:

Caelum nitescere, arbores frondescere,
Vites laetificae pampinis pubescere,
Rami bacarum ubertate incuruescere.

—(Cf. Verrier, II, 193 f.).

But accentual verse with rime or alliteration was early abandoned by literary poets and banished from polite society. It was regarded as vulgar and barbarous by the "docti." Rime in particular was regarded with contempt. As Verrier says, "L'homophonie s'associait dans l'esprit des poètes lettrés aux dictons triviaux ou au moins prosaïques, à la poésie populaire et vieillotte, de forme inculte, comme aux jeux de mots de Plaute: elle ne pouvait laisser d'avoir pour eux quelque chose de vulgaire; ils ne pouvaient manquer de la bannir au fur et à mesure qu'ils imitaient avec plus d'exactitude leurs modèles grecs."³¹ The attitude of the grammarians is shown by Pompeius: "Homoeteleuton est quotiens in verba exitus est unius soni. . . . Antiquum est hoc totum, hodie nemo facit; si qui fecerit, ridetur."³²

composition, as aids to memory the author uses accentual syllabic rhythm, rime, stanzas in alphabetical order, and the refrain.

³¹ Verrier, *op. cit.*, II, 193 f.

³² Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, v, 304. The quotation sounds familiar: it is substantially what the free verse enthusiast thinks today about rime. Indeed, contempt for rime is no new thing: it seems to be a recurrent phenomenon. Recall Ascham: ". . . rude beggarly riming . . . to follow rather the Goths in riming than the Greeks in true versifying were even to eat acorns with swine, when we may freely eat wheat bread among men." Or Milton's characterization

Regardless of the contempt of the *docti*, rime in accentual Latin verse persisted in the poetry of the people, and was destined to achieve in the fourth and following centuries a sanction which later made it tremendously influential in all Christendom. ". . . l'usage de la rime se développa dans la poésie latine populaire. Elle y existait certainement au IV^e siècle. Les poètes chrétiens la lui empruntèrent en même temps que le mètre de leurs hymnes accentuelles. . . . C'est saint Ambroise (333-397) qui introduisit dans cette église [Milan] le chant des hymnes. Il en compona lui-même un certain nombre. En voici quelques vers:

Sic quinque millibus viris
Dum quinque panes dividis,
Edentium sub dentibus
In ore crescebat cibus. Hymne V.

Somno refectis artibus
Spreto cubili surgimus;
Nobis, pater, canentibus
Adesse te deposcimus.

Te lingua primum concinat,
Te mentis ardor ambiat;
Ut actuum sequentum
Tu, sancte, sis exordium. Hymne IX." ³³

It is hardly necessary to trace here the use of rime in accentual verse from the time of Ambrosius, Hilary and Prudentius in the fourth century down through the Middle Ages. Of the 153 Latin hymns of the Anglo-Saxon church, derived chiefly from a manuscript of the eleventh century,³⁴ at least one-third show rime which is fairly regu-

of rime as "the invention of a barbarous age to set off wretched matter and lame metre; . . . a thing of itself to all judicious ears trivial and of no musical delight." (Introduction to *P. L.*)

³³ Verrier, *op. cit.*, II, p. 194.

³⁴ *Latin Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, Surtees Society, vol. xxiii.

lar and apparently not accidental, while many others show sporadic rime. One of the oldest Latin rhythmical compositions which originated in Britain is the prayer of Gildas (*ca. 550*), which consists of 40 eleven-syllable lines in rimed pairs, and begins:

Dei patris festinare maximum
Mihi cito peto adiutorium.
Iesu Christi imploro suffragia
Qui natus est ex virgine Maria.³⁵

And Bede not only looked with favor upon accentual hymns (as we have seen), but apparently wrote them himself; for in the list of his works at the end of his *Ecclesiastical History* he mentions a *Librum hymnorum diverso metro sive rhythmo*.³⁶ But since Bede's hymns have not been positively identified, it is not possible to determine whether or not he used rime. It is fairly certain that Aldhelm, besides the vernacular songs referred to above, composed also accentual Latin verse with rime.³⁷ And the following passage from St. Boniface shows that as early as the eighth century *rhythmus* connoted *rime*: "Tertium quoque [carminis genus] non pedum mensura elucubra-

³⁵ Ed. by Wilhelm Meyer, "Gildae Oratio Rhythmica," *Nachrichten, k. Gesells. der Wissensch., Philol.-Hist. Klasse, Göttingen*, 1912, p. 48 ff.

³⁶ In view of the distinction which Bede is at pains to make between *metrum* and *rhythmus* in his *De Arte Metrica*, it is hard to understand the use of *sive* here.

³⁷ Cf. Du Cange, *sub rhythmi versus*: "Epist. 4 inter eas quae S. Bonifacio Moguntino adscribuntur: Obsecro ut mihi Aldhelmi Episcopi aliqua opuscula, seu prosarum seu metrorum, aut *rhythmicorum* mittere digneris." Cf. also Manitius, *Handbuch der Klass. Altertumswissenschaft*, IX, 140: "Sicher Hat sich Aldhelm auch mit rhythmischen Gedichten befasst. . . . ut non inconvenienter carmine rhythmico dici queat:

Christus passus patibulo atque leti latibulo
Virginem virgo virgini commendabat tutamini."

tum, sed octonis syllabis in quolibet versu compositis, una eademque littera comparibus linearum tramitibus aptata cursim calamo perante caraxatum tibi . . . dieavi.”³⁸ Du Cange continues his discussion of *rythmici versus*: “At rythmicos versus vocarunt scriptores aevi inferioris, quos alii Leoninos, seu ὄμοιτελεύτους. Alvarus (ninth century) in Vita S. Eulogii num. 3: Epistolatim in invicem egimus, et rythmicis versibus non laudibus mulcebamus.” The word *rythmus* very early meant *rime*: Dante regularly uses it in that sense in his Latin works.³⁹ And, notwithstanding the arguments of Diez,⁴⁰ Körting,⁴¹ and others, the *New English Dictionary* is unquestionably correct in its derivation of English *rime*: “Rime < O. F. *rime* < **ridme*, **ritme* ad Lat. *rithmus*, *rythmus*, more correctly *rhythmus* a Gr. *ρυθμός* = measured motion, time, proportion. In medieval Latin the terms *rithmi* and *rithmici versus* were used to denote accentual in contrast to quantitative verse (metra). As similarity of the terminal sounds was a common feature of accentual verse, *rithmus* naturally came to have the sense of *rime*.”⁴²

In Latin, then, the literary quantitative verse was preceded and later accompanied by a vast amount of unwritten

³⁸ Liber Epistolarum S. Bonifacii, Epist. 65, quoted by Du Cange sub *rythmici versus*.

³⁹ Cf. *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, chs. 5, 9, 12, and 13.

⁴⁰ Diez, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Rom. Sprachen*, 5th ed.

⁴¹ Körting, *lateinisch-Rom. Wörterbuch*, 3rd ed.

⁴² It is hardly necessary to multiply instances showing that *rythmus* and *rime* were synonymous; but, cf. *Promptorium Parvulorum*: “Ryme: Rhythmus, -mi, Rithma, -atis; Rymyn: Rhythmico, -as, avi.” Cf. also *Catholicon Anglicum*: “to Ryme, rithmicari: a Ryme, rithmus.” Cf. also Thompson, G. A.: *Elizabethan Criticism of Poetry* (Un. of Chicago Diss., 1914), p. 13: (Quoting Stanyhurst) “What Tom Towley is so simple that will not attempt to be a *rithmour*? . . . Good God, what a fry of such wooden *rythmours* doth swarm in stationars' shops!” Cf. also the “*Ars Rithmicandi*” (14th century) in *Reliquiae Antiquae*, I, 30 ff.

ten popular accentual verse—*rythmi* or *rythmici versus*—with strong stress and homophony. Though this early popular poetry was virtually unrecorded, its rhythms, perhaps because of their popular appeal, were adopted by the clerical hymn writers. And the word *rythmus* connoted *rime*.

So in Anglo-Saxon England there was much popular verse, unwritten, scorned and condemned by the clerics. Many of these *cantica rustica* were undoubtedly choral songs with stress-rhythm and homophony. The analogy of popular Latin poetry suggests strongly the existence of Anglo-Saxon *rythmici versus*,⁴³ which preceded and continued to exist beside the literary and learned alliterative poetry.

Occasionally even in the Anglo-Saxon poetry (and prose) that was preserved in manuscript we find rime here and there. Sometimes it seems to be accidental; sometimes it arises from the introduction of ready-made riming phrases or formulas (e. g., *hider* and *þider*, *feond* and *freond*, *gleam* and *dream*, *wid* and *sid*, etc.); and sometimes it is evidently striven for,⁴⁴ e. g., in the well-known passage in *Elene* beginning:

⁴³ Indeed, *rythmici versus* are so natural that they are not improbably the humble beginnings of poetry everywhere and precede literary poetry in all literatures: e. g., with regard the Celtic, cf. Verrier, *op. cit.*, II, p. 196: "L'usage de la rime chez les Bretons de France et chez ceux de Grande-Bretagne prouve qu'ils s'en servaient au commencement du Ve siècle: ils ne pouvaient guère l'avoir empruntée aux hymnes latines, encore toutes récentes"; and with regard to Old Norse, cf. Du Cange, sub *modus*: "cantus rhythmicus. Sueno in Hist. Danica, cap. 1: A quo primum modis Islandensibus Skiodaugar sunt reges nuncupati. Id est, in *rhythmis*, carminibus, sive cantilenis antiquis, quibus Islandi fortia heroum ad lyram in convivis decantare solebant." Cf. also F. M. Warren, "The Romance Lyric," *P. M. L. A.*, xxvi, 235 ff.

⁴⁴ It is hardly necessary to multiply instances. For the collection and classification of Anglo-Saxon rimes, cf. Kluge, "Zur Geschichte des Reimes," *P. B. B.*, ix, 422 f.

þus ic frod ond fus þurh þæt fæcne hus
word-cræftum wæf ond wundrum læs,
þragum þreodude ond geþanc reodode
nihtes naerwe; nysse ic gearwe.

And the Rimed Poem (tenth century) shows conclusively what one could do if he put his mind on the business of riming,⁴⁵ for it is probably the most berimed body of verse in English literary history. For example, consider:

flah mah fliteþ, flan man hwiteþ,
borgsorg biteþ, bald ald witeþ,
wræc sæc writeþ, wraþ aþ smiteþ—
syngrym sideþ, searofearo glideþ. (vv. 62-65).

Though it is true, as Kluge⁴⁶ and Verrier⁴⁷ have pointed out, that rime increases in frequency in the alliterative five-type verse from *Beowulf* on, the increase in this literary poetry⁴⁸ is too slight to be significant: what has been preserved of Anglo-Saxon poetry never becomes regularly and completely rhythmical, rimed, or strophic in form. It may be recited or chanted, but it does not have a singing rhythm: its varying rhythms suggest those of the *Pater Noster* and the *Credo*⁴⁹ rather than those of the accentual Latin hymns. The fact is that virtually no lyric verse has

⁴⁵ Whether the poem is an imitation of the O. N. *runhenda* does not matter. The whole poem is *sui generis* in Anglo-Saxon. It is interesting to note, however, that many of the rimed phrases of which it is made up (e. g., borgsorg biteþ) have the characteristics of proverbial wisdom, and so suggest antiquity and popular origin.

⁴⁶ Kluge, "Zur Geschichte des Reimes," *P. B. B.*, IX, 444.

⁴⁷ Verrier, *op. cit.*, II, 201.

⁴⁸ Whatever the provenance of *Beowulf*, the poem as we have it is of course literary.

⁴⁹ Cf.:

Pater noster qui es in coelis
Sanctificetur nomen tuum
Adveniat regnum tuum
Fiat voluntas tua sicut in celo, etc.

and

Credo in deum patrem omnipotentem
Et in Jesum Christum filium eius unicum, etc.

been preserved, that is, no verse adapted to, and intended for, singing. And when we recall that the monks, from whom all our manuscripts have come, held the *vulgares cantilenaes* and *cantica rustica* in contempt, the absence of the popular song is easily accounted for. Of the form of these popular lyrics we have no direct manuscript evidence.⁵⁰

Yet in addition to the presumptive and circumstantial evidence just considered, there are in the monkish manuscripts certain hints and scraps, which are the more convincing as evidence because they are the unconscious admissions of hostile witnesses. In the first place, the large number of homophonous phrases (with rime or alliteration or both) in legal formulas proves uncontestedly that the use of rime as well as of alliteration was natural and spontaneous among the Germanic tribes everywhere. Legal phrases such as *to slitan oppe to bitan, unclæne ond unmæne, ceorl ond eorl, grifian ond frifian, ræd ond dæd, healdan ond wealdan, be stronde ond be londe*,⁵¹ are significant: no one would maintain that the rime here is exotic.⁵² And in other prose than the laws we find abun-

⁵⁰ What indeed was the form of the *Hildebrandslied* or of the constituent parts of *Beowulf* before the monks wrote the manuscripts of these poems? Ballads in alliterating five-type verse? Or more rhythmical songs adapted to choral singing? We do not know. Tacitus uses the word *concentus*, "qui exige," as Verrier says, "la mesure isochrone, en particulier le chant de marche." (Cf. Verrier: *op. cit.*, II, 163 and notes); and, as we have seen, Du Cange, defining *modus*, equates it with *cantus rhythmicus*, and cites Sueno in Hist. Danica cap. 1: "A quo primum modis Islandensibus Skioildauger sunt reges nuncupati. Id est, in *rhythmis*, carminibus, sive cantilenis antiquis, quibus Islandi fortia heroum facta ad lyram in conviviis decantare solebant." Hence it may be that Charlemagne's *barbara et antiquissima carmina, quibus veterum regum actus et bella canebantur* had a form different from that of the alliterative epic which presumably grew out of them.

⁵¹ Cf. Kluge, *P. B. B.*, IX, 424 f.

⁵² Cf. Verrier, *op. cit.*, II, 199: "De même que les anciens Italiotes, les anciens Germains possédaient déjà de nombreuses formules homo-

dant use of rimed rhythmic formulas, e. g.: *growan ond blowan, on æte ond on wæte, liss ond bliss, swicol ond ficol, wlanc ond ranc, werian ond nerian, stalu ond qualu, berypan ond bestrypan*.⁵³ Just as now, so in the beginning the riming or alliterating formula had a charm for the ear and clung to the memory. And the literary poets frequently made use of such phrases, e. g.: *healdan ond wealdan, steep ond geap, gleam ond dream, wrencan ond blencan, frod ond god, dreosan ond hreosan*.⁵⁴ These formulas, considered alone, offer sufficient proof that in the earliest times whatsoever the principle of rime was familiar and congenial to the Anglo-Saxon mind.

As has been said, we have no manuscript record of genuine popular Anglo-Saxon poetry in its original form. Without exception, all manuscripts in England, as elsewhere, contain only such material as would pass the censorship of clerical redactors and scribes. Therefore, with regard to that small fraction of Anglo-Saxon poetry which touches upon or is concerned with early and heathen themes, we can not be certain of either the original content or the original form. We are sure of one thing: that practically all of this material was moulded, manipulated, and veneered with the teachings and phraseology of the Church. When then we turn to the few extant Anglo-Saxon charms and incantations, which constitute the nearest approach to primitive popular poetry,⁵⁵ we must not

phoniques, où figurait le plus souvent l'allitération, mais aussi la consonance, l'assonance ou la rime. Ils en employaient à coup sur avant de se séparer en plusieurs peuples: nous en retrouvons dans la prose des anciens dialectes germaniques, qui leur sont communes à tous."

⁵³ For numerous examples, cf. Kluge, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

⁵⁴ There are many. Cf. Kluge, p. 425 f.

⁵⁵ It might plausibly be maintained that the incantation wherever found is the most primitive form of poetry, and that it contains in

forget that even these charms as we have them are *Christianized* charms, in which the names of Christ and the Virgin are invoked and the Pater Noster and Ter Sanctus mingle freely with the vernacular. Though the baptismal vow involved forsaking the devil and all his works and all the heathen gods, the Church was willing to compromise by appropriating and giving a new turn to heathen practices which, too deeply rooted to be eradicated, might be diverted to her use. As with Easter, so it was with the charms: the effort to Christianize them is obvious.

And yet in all of them—in some more than in others—pagan elements are evident. And if we notice particularly the *lyric* part of the incantation, the adjuration or prayer which follows the narrative element, we shall discover that this part of the formula tends to become more regularly rhythmical and homophonous, e. g. :

Erce, Erce, Erce, eorþan modor,
Geunne þe se alwalda, ece drihten,
Aecera wexendra and wridendra,
Eaenidendra and elniendra,
Sceafta heries, scire-wæstma
And þære þradan bere wæstma
And þære hwitan hwaete wæstma
And ealre eorþan wæstma.⁵⁶

Also :

Gif þu wære on fell scoten oþþe wære on flæsc scoten
Oþþe wære on blod scoten oþþe wære on ban scoten
Oþþe wære on lif scoten; naefre ne sy þin lif atæsed;
Gif hit wære esa gescot oþþe hit wære ylfa gescot
Oþþe hit wære haegtessan gescot: nu ic wille þin helpan.
þis þe to bote esa gescotes, þis þe to bote ylfa gescotes,
þis þe to bote hægtessan gescotes: ic þin wille helpan.⁵⁷

germinal form the beginnings from which evolve in the process of the ages narrative, lyric, and dramatic poetry.

⁵⁶ First charm, vv. 50-57, *G-W. Bibl.*, I, 315.

⁵⁷ Second charm, vv. 20-26, *G-W. Bibl.*, I, 318.

Also:

Sitte ge, sigewif, sigaþ to eorþan!
 Naefre ge wilde to wudu fleogan!
 Beo ge swa gemindige mines godes,
 Swa biþ manna gehwilc metes and eþeles.⁵⁸

Also:

Find þaet feoh and fere þaet feoh
 And hafa þaet feoh and heald þaet feoh.⁵⁹

Also:

þis me to bote þære laþan læþbyrde,
 þis me to bote þære swærðan swærþbyrde,
 þis me to bote þære laþan lamþyrd.⁶⁰

Since we are in quest of traces of primitive popular poetry, and since the few Anglo-Saxon charms preserved (and reformed) are doubtless insignificant in number when compared to those which are lost, it is pertinent to our inquiry here to glance at the early continental Germanic charms of which we have manuscript evidence. Though these too have been "edited," we find in them as in the Anglo-Saxon incantations certain primitive elements. And as in the Anglo-Saxon we find the same tendency toward homophony and regularity of rhythm, e. g.:

Eiris sazun idisi sazun hera duoder.
 Suma hapt heptidun, suma heri lezidun,
 Suma clubodun umbi cuniouuidi:
 Insprine haptbandun, invar vigandun! ⁶¹

⁵⁸ Third charm, vv. 8-11, *G-W. Bibl.*, L, 320.

⁵⁹ Fourth charm, vv. 8, 9; *G-W Bibl.*, I, 325.

⁶⁰ Seventh charm, vv. 4-6, *G-W Bibl.*, 327. Cf. also the eighth charm, vv. 21 ff., *G-W. Bibl.*, I, 329.

⁶¹ Erster Merseburger Spruch, vv. 1-4: for the collection cf. Müllenhoff und Scherer, *Denkmäler deutschen Poesie u. Prosa*, I, §§ IV, XIV, XLVII.

Also:

Thu biguolen Sinhgunt, Sunna era suister,
 Thu biguolen Frija, Volla era suister:
 Thu biguolen Uuodan, so he uuola condar,
 Sose benrenki, sose bluotrenki, sose lidirenki:
 Ben zi bena, bluot zi bluoda,
 Lid zi gilidin, sose gelimida sin.⁶²

Also:

Sizi, sizi, bina: inbot dir sancte Marja.
 Hurolob ni habe du: zi holce ni flue du,
 Noh du mir nindrinnen, noh du mir nintuuinnest.
 Sizi vilu stillo, uuirki godes uuillon.⁶³

Still other examples which might be cited must be relegated to a foot-note.⁶⁴

⁶² Zweiter Merseburger Spruch, vv. 3-8.

⁶³ Lorscher Bienenseggen, vv. 3-6.

⁶⁴ Cf. Müllenhoff u. Scherer, vol. I, sec. XLVII:

Also verstant du, bluotrinna,
 Durh des heiligen Christes minna:
 Du verstant an der note,
 Also der Jordan tate. (Milstätter Blutsagen, vv. 7-10.)

Cf. also the longer "Münchner Ausfahrtsegen," no. 3 in sec. XLVII. Early Christian prayers in the vernacular assume and continue the form of the heathen incantations. Cf. Friedrich Hälsig, *Zauberspruch bei den Germanen*, Leipzig, 1910, p. 16 f.: "Trotz aller Anstrengungen und aller später angewendeten Härte, und obgleich auch seit dem frühesten Zeiten die Staatsgewalt die Bemühungen der Kirche unterstützte, ist es ihr nicht gelungen, Zaubergräben und Zauberei auszurotten. Dazu hat aber nicht zum wenigsten der Umstand beigetragen, dass die Kirche selbst an der Möglichkeit der Zauberei festhielt, dass sie nur unter anderen Namen ganz die gleichen Dinge wie die heidnischen Zauberer trieb, und dass endlich ein grosser Teil der Geistlichkeit genau so im Banne des Aberglaubens stand, wie die Laienwelt des Mittelalters. Alle Verbote und Strafen haben deshalb nicht zu verhindern gemocht, dass sich immerfort Geistliche an der Auffassung und dem Gebrauche von Zauberformeln beteiligt haben."

Now, in view of the very small amount of extant Anglo-Saxon verse that may be called primitive and popular, this evidence of regular stress-rhythm and homophony (including not only alliteration but also rime and assonance) is significant: it tends strongly to prove that such rhythm and homophony originated spontaneously in Germanic verse and so antedated any possible Latin or French influence.⁶⁵ Furthermore, it strongly suggests that the lost popular songs, the various types of *leōþ*, *vulgares cantilena* and *cantica rustica et inepta*, were also characterized by fairly regular stress-rhythm and homophony; in other words, that together with, and possibly prior to, the literary and classical five-type alliterating verse form in the "high style," there existed in abundance humbler "vulgar" songs with definite, strongly marked rhythms and with rime as well as alliteration—songs which bore to literary Anglo-Saxon poetry the same relation that popular accentual Latin verse bore to literary quantitative Latin verse. And the strong probability is that this rhythm and rime persisted in the submerged popular poetry *after* the conversion to Christianity just as it had done before.

With regard to the literary vernacular poetry there is no evidence that the accentual rimed Latin hymns had

⁶⁵ With regard to the fundamental antiquity of the charms it should be noted that the points of correspondence between the Anglo-Saxon and the Old High German bee charms quoted above are, notwithstanding the mention of God and the Virgin in the O.H.G., evidence to show that they are different versions of the same thing and hence antedate the introduction of Christianity. Cf. Zupitza, *Anglia*, I, 195 f.: "Mir scheint aber die teilweise übereinstimmung des englischen spruches mit dem in Deutschland bekannt geworden auf eine vorchristliche fassung hinzuweisen, welche die Britannię bevölkern Germanen ebenso aus ihrer alten in ihre neue heimat mitgenommen haben, wie z. b. ältere recensionen des Merseburger zaubersprüche."

any effect upon it at any time during the Anglo-Saxon period, though these hymns were doubtless known in England from the seventh century on.⁶⁶ There is, to be sure, an increase in the amount of rime in one or two short ballad-like poems imbedded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, e. g., the one under the year 1036:

Ac Godwine hine þa gelette and hine on hæft sette,
 And his geferan he todraf and sume mislice ofsloh,
 Sume hi man wiþ feo sealde, sume hreowlich acwealde,
 Sume hi man bende, sume hi man blonde,
 Sume hamelode, sume hættode.
 Ne wearþ dreolice dæd gedon on þison earde,
 Syþþan Dene comon and her friþ namon!
 Nu is to gelyfenne to þan leofan gode,
 þæt hi blission bliþe mid Criste,
 þe wæron butan scylde swa earmlice acwealde.
 Se æþeling lyfode þa gyt: ælc yfel man him gehet,
 Of þæt man gerædde, þæt man hine lædde
 To Eligbyrig swa gebundenne.
 Sona swa he lende, on scype man hine blende
 And hine swa blindne brohte to þam munecon;
 And he þar wunode þa hwile þe he lyfode.
 Syþþan hine man byrigde, swa him wel gebyrede,
 Ful wurþlice, swa he wyrþe waes,
 Aet þam westende, þam stype ful gehende
 On þam subþortice: seo saul is mid Criste.⁶⁷

But it surely would be straining a point to maintain that the increase in rime at this late date was suddenly due to the influence of the hymns. On the other hand, it is reasonable to cite this poem as evidence of the continuous existence and now partial recognition of popular rhythm and rime.

Furthermore, just as this poem is too late for Latin influence from the hymns, so it is too early for French

⁶⁶ Cf. Bede, *De Arte Metrica*, *supra*.

⁶⁷ *G-W. Bibl.*, I, 385.

influence. In the first place, it antedates the Conquest by thirty years. In the second place, there was no rimed literary French poetry at that date available as a model; and, though in France as elsewhere there were doubtless rhythmical *vulgares cantilenae*, it is highly improbable that they were known in England or served as a model in 1036 for the Anglo-Saxon poem. All the evidence points to this conclusion: (1) the semi-popular ballad-like Chronicle poem dated 1036 is with its rhythm and rime a native product and that its form was not influenced by the Latin hymns or by any French verse whatever; (2) this Chronicle poem points definitely to the existence of much rhythmical rimed vernacular poetry, some earlier, some contemporary, but all now lost to us.⁶⁸

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⁶⁸ Turning from the latest Anglo-Saxon poems to the earliest in Middle English, may we not say that the *Cantus Beati Godrici* (ca. 1150) is possibly rather a further recognition of native than an imitation of foreign rhythms:

Sainte Marie, Christes bur,
Maidenes clenhad, moderes flur,
Dilie minne sinne, rix in min mod,
Bring me to winne wiþ self god.

The rhythm would seem to be at least as close to that of the Anglo-Saxon bee charm as to that of the accentual Latin hymns: cf.

Sitte ge, sigewif, sigaþ to eorþan!
Naefre ge wilde to wudu fleogan!
Beo ge swa gemindige mines godes,
Swa biþ manna gehwile metes and eþeles.

Moreover, the *Cantus Beati Godrici*, like the Chronicle poem, is too early to have been influenced by any similar manuscript French poetry, even if such manuscript actually existed at the time.